Commercial wings of embassies

1566. SHRI RAHUL BAJAJ:

SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the steps that have been taken to improve the effectiveness of the commercial wings of our Embassies; and

(b) the additional business for Indian industry the Ministry created each year during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S. M. KRISHNA): (a) The Government has taken several steps to improve the effectiveness of the commercial wings of our embassies with a view to making them more responsive to the growing demands and expectations of business and industry. Additional funds have been placed at their disposal through various schemes such as the Market Expansion Activities budget and the Challenge Fund to enable them to undertake various promotional activities such as market surveys, seminars, workshops, buyer-seller meets, media campaigns, outreach activities, etc. with the aim of promoting trade and investment, expanding markets for Indian products and projecting brand India. Necessary support to commercial wings is also provided through information dissemination in the form of booklets and CD-ROMs containing updated data on various sectors of the Indian economy and Government policies, weekly and monthly bulletins, setting up of websites, etc.

(b) As trade promotion depends on a number of factors, it is difficult to quantify the additional business for Indian industry the Ministry created. However Indian Missions and Posts have contributed significantly to the growth of India's exports of goods and services. Indian industries have benefited from the activity of commercial wings in many ways including through dissemination of information related to export promotion and investment activities, market information, trade facilitation of visiting businessmen and delegations and help in resolving trade disputes.

Maritime boundary dispute with Bangladesh

†1567. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the issue of maritime boundary dispute with Bangladesh has reached in United Nations; and

(b) if so, the efforts made by Government to solve the problems with neighbouring country through talks?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA): (a) and (b) Two rounds of bilateral talks on the demarcation of the maritime boundary between India and Bangladesh were held in September, 2008 and March, 2009. These were technical-level talks and the Indian delegation was

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi

led by Chief Hydrographer. However, the Government of Bangladesh has gone in for arbitration as provided under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea with respect to the demarcation of the maritime boundary between India and Bangladesh.

Dalai Lama's visit to Arunachal Pradesh

1568. SHRI BHARATKUMAR RAUT: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether China has expressed concern over the Dalai Lama's visit to Arunachal Pradesh;

(b) in what manner it affects China if any Spiritual Figure visit any of the regions of Indian soil; and

(c) the reaction of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S. M. KRISHNA): (a) to (c) The Chinese side expressed their concern on the visit of Dalai Lama to Arunachal Pradesh which they claim is a "disputed area". Government's clear and consistent position that Arunachal Pradesh is an integral and inalienable part of India and that Dalai Lama is free to visit any part of India has been clearly conveyed to the Chinese side.

Selection of Haj pilgrims

1569. SHRI N. BALAGANGA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the criteria adopted by Government for selection of Haj pilgrims through Government quota; and

(b) the numbers of pilgrims selected by the Union Government, State-wise, during the current year particularly from Tamil Nadu?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SHASHI THAROOR): (a) The distribution of government quota and additional quota was released for the following categories:

(i) Khadim-ul-Hujjaj selected by the State Haj Committees;

(ii) Mehram of female pilgrims, who by Saudi law, need to be accompanied by a male relative *viz.* father, husband, brother, son;

(iii) States on special political considerations and receiving excess applications *e.g.* J&K/ Lakshadweep etc;

(iv) Individual applicants who did not get selected in the qurrah but have an objective reason to perform Haj *i.e.* family obligation, age, health and have been recommended by MPs, Ministers and other eminent persons;